



Manistee County Board of Commissioners

Manistee County Courthouse • 415 Third Street • Manistee, Michigan 49660

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May 17, 2011

State Senator Rick Jones
Michigan Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

RE: Senate Bill No. 319

Dear Senator Jones:

On Tuesday, April 26, 2011, the Manistee County Board of Commissioners took action to unanimously oppose Senate Bill 319, which would officially and permanently eliminate the 85th District Court Judge position in Manistee and Benzie Counties. As I'm sure you are aware, the Manistee County Board of Commissioners are very concerned with maintaining the same efficiencies in the 85th District Court which have been displayed over the past 25 years by the Honorable Brent Danielson.

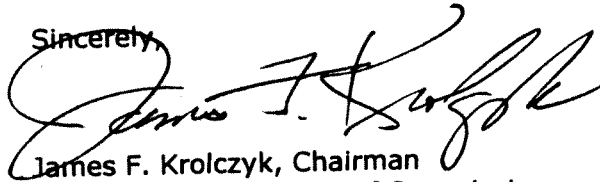
Maintaining low costs and consistent revenues made the 85th District Court one of the more efficient operations within Manistee County government. We have read with interest the claim on your website that a typical trial court judge costs approximately \$460,000 with \$160,000 of that amount in State costs and \$300,000 in local government costs. While this statement may be true with regards to the State of Michigan's costs, it is not even close when considering local costs. The 85th District Court expense budget, which was prepared prior to knowledge of Judge Danielson's retirement, consisted of \$690,043 in budgeted expenses and \$727,137 in budgeted revenues. Of the total expense, only \$61,446 in gross expenses could be directly or partially attributable to the judge's salary, fringe benefits and other operating expenses such as travel, dues and fees, books and periodicals, etc. After eliminating the wage portion of the expense budget, which is 100% reimbursed by the State of Michigan, the savings directly attributable to the judge is reduced to \$15,722, which includes actual fringe benefits paid on the judge's behalf, and other operating expenses. These cost savings will be easily spent in the future as the county takes on the responsibility of paying for visiting judges, increased court appointed attorneys and jail bed days caused by the inefficient operation of the court, and the loss of substantial court costs and civil fines, which are assessed differently by each visiting judge who generally has less regard for efficient operations within the local unit of government.

As you and your Committee continue to discuss Senate Bill No. 319, please consider the negative effects this action will cause in Manistee County, both from a financial standpoint and with respect to a court schedule that would negatively impact due process rights of Manistee

County citizens. The County understands the State's need to address its budget concerns, however, please consider the validity of your research into local impacts, which are caused by your actions.

We ask that you and your Committee please consider maintaining the 85th District Court judgeship in Manistee and Benzie Counties. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James F. Krolczyk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "K".

James F. Krolczyk, Chairman
Manistee County Board of Commissioners

CC: Senator Tonya Schuitmaker
Senator Tory Rocca
Senator Steven Bieda
Senator Darwin Booher
Representative Ray Franz
Governor Rick Snyder
All Manistee County Commissioners
Michigan Association of Counties
Hon. James Batzer, 19th Circuit Court Judge
Hon. Thomas Brunner, Manistee County Probate Court Judge
Antoinette Gorch, 85th District Court Magistrate

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